

Reflections for Lent 2008

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for Pathways Church

During the forty days leading up to Easter, Christians observe a time of self-examination. We recognize and repent of our wrong-doing and turn again toward Christ as our savior.

In the following suggestions for reflection, each week has a general theme and each day a reading from Scripture. The themes move from our general human condition to specific personal wrongs, and then from our need to God's response, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

You are invited to read each day's text slowly and reflectively, and to repeat the highlighted verse during the day. The questions are intended to stimulate thought rather than to prescribe response; however, you may want to note or write out your thoughts and prayers.

Any value in this process depends upon your desire to open your heart and life to God. It is God's Spirit who applies God's word to our hearts, so it is good to begin each day's reading with prayer:

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23,24*

February 06 Ash Wednesday

What does this time of returning to God mean to me?

Reading: Joel 2:12-18

"'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.'"
Joel 2:12

Reflection: In what way do I need to return to the Lord?

February 07 Thursday

Genesis 7:11-23

"For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth." Gen. 7:16

Reflection: How does the experience of Noah in the ark relate to marking the forty days in Lent?

February 08 Friday

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

“Now choose life, so that you and your children may live, and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him.” Deut. 30:19b

Reflection: What is the relationship between these words and the forty years the people of Israel had spent wandering in the wilderness?

February 09 Saturday

Luke 4:1-13

“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: “People do not live on bread alone.”’” Luke 4:4

Reflection: How will I notice God speaking to me?

February 10 Sunday

First Week: How will I observe this time of preparation?

Matthew 6:7-15

“Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” Mt. 6:8

Reflection: What part of this prayer is most my own?

February 11 Monday

Matthew 6:5-6

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.” Mt. 6:6

Reflection: In what specific ways is God inviting me to pray?

February 12 Tuesday

Philippians 4:6-9

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Phil. 4:6

Reflection: What specific anxieties prevent me from entrusting myself and my circumstances to God?

February 13 Wednesday

II Timothy 3:14-17

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training.” II Tim. 3:16

Reflection: In what ways am I learning about God from the written Word?

February 14 Thursday

I Samuel 3: 1-21

“The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’” I Sam. 3: 10

Reflection: How do I notice God speaking to me? How am I paying attention?

February 15 Friday

Romans 12: 1-2

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Rom. 12:2a

Reflection: Where am I actively seeking the renewal of my mind?

February 16 Saturday

I Corinthians 11:23-32

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” I Cor. 11:26

Reflection: How is my taking communion on Sunday connected to my everyday experience with God?

February 17 Sunday

Second Week: Where do I see the world separated from God?

Luke 5:27-32

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:32

Reflection: How do Jesus’ words apply to me? Do I consider myself among the righteous, or among the sinners?

February 18 Monday

Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18

“Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.” Lev. 19:1

Reflection: Where do I see these foundational commands most violated in the world around me?

February 19 Tuesday

Jonah 3:1-10

“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” Jonah 1:1

Reflection: How is my own city opposing the right and just ways of God? Do I run from my own responsibilities there, as Jonah did?

February 20 Wednesday

Luke 11:29-32

“For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.” Luke 11:30

Reflection: What form does evil take in my own time—nationally, internationally, globally? Where am I acting to confront it?

February 21 Thursday

Luke 16:19-31

'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.' Luke 16:25

Reflection: What implications does Jesus' story hold for me and my wealthy nation?

February 22 Friday

Amos 5:7-15

"Seek good, not evil, that you may live." Amos 5:14

Reflection: Where do I most notice unjust treatment of the poor? How do I respond?

February 23 Saturday

Daniel 9:4-11

"We have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets." Dan. 9:10

Reflection: What words of confession do I need to speak as a citizen of God's world? What action do I take?

February 24 Sunday

Third Week: Where is my private world separated from God?

Jeremiah 17:5-10

"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." Jer. 17:10

Reflection: What comes up on the screen when I examine my personal choices through the eyes of God?

February 25 Monday

Matthew 25:31-46

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Mt. 25:40

Reflection: What am I doing that puts me in line with the sheep, on the King's right hand, in this story Jesus told?

February 26 Tuesday

Ezekiel 28:1-5

"In the pride of your heart, you say, 'I am a god.'" Ez. 28:2

Reflection: In what ways has citizenship in my nation become an idol for me?

February 27 Wednesday

Romans 13:1-7

"Give to everyone what you owe: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." Rom. 13:7

Reflection: Am I an active agent for good toward others, locally, nationally, globally?

February 28 Thursday

Romans 13:8-10

“Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” Rom. 13:10

Reflection: Who is my neighbor, and what kind of neighbor am I?

February 29 Friday

Matthew 5:43-48

“...love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you...” Mt. 5:44

Reflection: Who is my enemy? Who looks to me like the hostile Other? How do I respond?

March 01 Saturday

Philippians 2:1-8

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves...” Phil. 2:3

Reflection: How am I connected to other people in my church, in the family of God?

March 02 Sunday

Fourth Week: Where is my own heart separated from God?

I John 1:1-7

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” I Jn. 1:7

Reflection: Where and what do I want to hide from the light of God?

March 03 Monday

Genesis 37: 12-36

“Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” Gen. 37:27

Reflection: What family betrayal, rejection, or disregard do I need to bring into God’s truth and light?

March 04 Tuesday

I John 2:9-14

“Those who claim to be in the light but hate a fellow believer are still in the darkness.” I Jn. 2:9

Reflection: What does God reveal in the state of my heart toward other believers?

March 05 Wednesday

I Corinthians 13:1-13

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.” I Cor. 13:4

Reflection: How does my closest friendship/relationship look compared to this description of love?

March 06 Thursday

Psalm 84

“Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.” Psa. 84:10

Reflection: What is my personal goal--what am I really striving for, in my life?

March 07 Friday

II Corinthians 5:1-10

“For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.” II Cor. 5:4

Reflection: Where am I most frustrated as I attempt to live a life of faith?

March 08 Saturday

Luke 6:27-38

“For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Lk. 6:38

Reflection: What do I notice that is preventing me from freely receiving God’s mercy?

March 09 Sunday

Fifth Week: Crying out to God for mercy.

Isaiah 38:10-14

“My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens.
I am troubled; O Lord, come to my aid!” Isa. 38:14

Reflection: How is Hezekiah’s prayer my own?

March 10 Monday

Mark 10:46-52

“Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” Mk. 10:48

Reflection: What is my heart crying out?

March 11 Tuesday

Romans 7:14-25

“For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” Rom. 7:18b

Reflection: Where do I run into the limits of my will to do good?

March 12 Wednesday

Psalm 86

“Hear, O LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.” Psa. 86:1

Reflection: What in God’s character will respond to my need?

March 13 Thursday

Mark 9:14-29

“Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’” Mk. 9:24

Reflection: How does Jesus speak to me in this account?

March 14 Friday

Luke 18:9-14

“For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” Lk. 18:14

Reflection: Who am I in this parable of Jesus?

March 15 Saturday

Isaiah 1:15-20

“Stop doing wrong,
learn to do right!

Seek justice,
encourage the oppressed.” Isaiah 1: 16b, 17a

Reflection: How is my repentance showing up in my care for others?

March 16 Palm Sunday

Holy Week: In Jesus, God responds to our need.

Luke 19:28-40

Matthew 21:1-11

John 12: 12-16

“O LORD, save us;
O LORD, grant us success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.

From the house of the LORD we bless you.” Psalm 118:29

Reflection: Who is this who comes in the name of the Lord? What do I cry out?

March 17 Monday

John 11:45-47

“You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.” Jn. 11:50

Reflection: What in me is resisting the coming of Jesus?

March 18 Tuesday

Isaiah 49:1-7

“I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” Isa. 49:6b

Reflection: What do I think was the purpose of Jesus and his life?

March 19 Wednesday

John 15:26-16:15 (Jesus' words at the Last Supper)

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” Jn. 15:13a

Reflection: How does the work of God continue in my life?

March 20 Thursday, The Last Supper

John 13:1-15

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” Jn. 13:14

Reflection: What does it mean for Jesus to wash my feet?

March 21 Good Friday

Matthew 26 and 27

Read these chapters slowly, and be silent.

March 22 Holy Saturday

Isaiah 52:13-53

Reflection: What does this death mean for me?

March 23 Easter Sunday

John 20

I Corinthians 15:1-28

Reflection: Do I see Jesus alive today?